United Nations E/CN.3/2000/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 December 1999

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Thirty-first session
29 February-3 March 2000
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Economic statistics: service statistics

Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (Convener: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), which is contained in the annex. The report is transmitted to the Commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirtieth session.[1]

Action by the Commission

The Commission is requested to comment on the schedule for the completion of the draft manual on statistics of international trade in services, which is contained in the appendix to the report.

Notes

1 *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 4* (E/1999/24), chap. I.B.

* E/CN.3/2000/1.

00-23886 (E) 170100

Annex

Report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

1. The Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services has progressed development work on the proposed manual on statistics of international trade in services during 1999. The Task Force is convened by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and consists of members of the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Statistics Division, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

2. The draft manual is designed to serve a broad spectrum of statistical needs, but it places special emphasis on those of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Insofar as possible, it seeks to build upon rather than to suggest modifications to existing standards for compilation. Nonetheless, the draft manual takes a broader view of international trade in services than the conventional balance of payments perspective set out in the IMF *Balance of Payments Manual*, fifth edition (BPM5).[a] In particular, it includes a treatment of local delivery of services through a foreign commercial presence; provides a more detailed classification of services delivered through conventional trade between residents and non-residents than is contained in BPM5; and, using categories found in GATS, discusses various "modes of supply" through which services can be delivered. Links are provided from the classifications used in the draft manual to the Central Product Classification, Version 1.0[b] and the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3.[c]

3. Provisional versions of the draft manual were reviewed at a United Nations workshop on the System of National Accounts (Curaçao, 31 May-4 June 1999) and an OECD-Eurostat meeting of experts in trade in services (5 and 6 July 1999).

4. The Task Force reviewed the comments received from these two meetings on 7 July 1999, and a revised draft manual was released by the Task Force on 5 November 1999.

5. Chapter 4 of the above-mentioned draft, which discusses foreign affiliate trade in services, was presented to a meeting of the Statistical Working Party of the OECD Industry Committee during its session on globalization held on 18 and 19 November 1999.

6. The draft manual was circulated by the United Nations Statistics Division and IMF to the statistical organizations of all member countries for a worldwide review during November 1999. Copies were also sent by OECD to members of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, and the draft manual was posted on the OECD web site. Comments were requested by 21 January 2000.

7. The Task Force plans to meet in February 2000 at Washington, D.C., to review the comments received and prepare a version for review by a United Nations expert group in 2000 for finalization prior to submission to the Statistical Commission in 2001. A timetable for completion of the manual is contained in the appendix.

Notes

[a] Washington, D.C., 1996.

[b] Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 77, Version 1.0 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 98.XVII.5).

[c] Ibid., No. 34, Revision 3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XVII.12).

Appendix

Schedule for completion of the manual on statistics of international trade in services

2000	
21 January	Deadline for comments from worldwide review of draft manual
February	Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services meets at IMF headquarters, Washington, D.C., to review outcome of worldwide review and plan final version of manual
February-March	Task Force reports to Statistical Commission
Mid-year	United Nations expert group meeting in New York to finalize the manual, followed by Task Force meeting
2001	Submission of completed manual to Statistical Commission for approval